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Chiefs Establish New Christian Group

Assisting Chiefs to Live Their Faith Professionally and Personally

By Chief Patrick Oliver
Grandview Heights P.D.

There is a philosophy today that says that one's faith is a personal private matter and is inappropriate to be discussed or demonstrated in the workplace, in politics and in social settings.

Is the faith of an individual strictly a private matter? Is demonstrating your faith outside of spiritual activities appropriate? Specifically, if a Chief of Police claims to be a Christian (a follower of Jesus Christ), what effect does this have on how he or she does his or her job or functions at home? What are the guidelines for Biblical living?

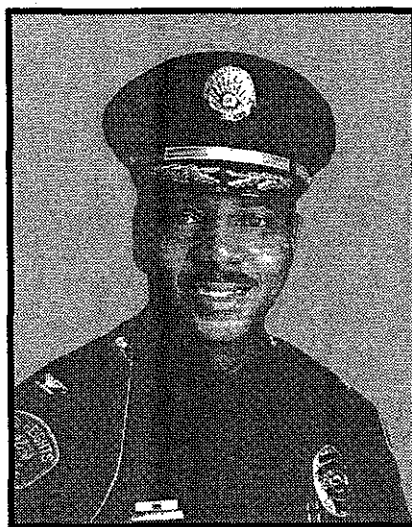
A Christian Chiefs Organization was recently established to seek God's guidance in addressing these issues and more.

Challenge of Christian Living

There have been a number of studies done to determine the difference in daily living between the average Christian and non-Christian. Examined were some measurable areas, such as: church attendance, Bible reading, prayer, time spent with family, the giving of tithes and offerings, etc.

All of these studies have concluded that there is only about a six percent difference between the average Christian and non-Christian. In other words, if you observe how many Christians live their lives, you would not see any difference in daily living among 94 percent of them. This indicates, at the very least, that the daily demonstration of Christian faith is both difficult and, therefore, seldom practiced.

Why do many Christians fail to demonstrate their faith in daily living? I suspect there are several answers; however, I have a theory on the primary answer. I believe this answer



Chief Oliver

is simplistic yet profound. Christians are too busy living their lives to stop and take time out to learn how to live the Christian life.

The primary purpose of the Christian Chiefs Organization is to assist Chiefs in the demonstration of their faith, professionally and personally. It seeks to increase its members' leadership ability through the hearing of God's word, prayer and fellowship through mentoring and modeling.

Your Faith: A Personal, Private Matter or Power for Living

Every person has a belief system which develops based on what you have learned, observed and experienced. This belief system has an evolutionary process and your current thinking is based on how you filter all this information.

I believe that every decision you make, both professionally and personally, is based on your belief system. Your belief system affects how you function at home, at work and in social settings, and is the primary filter through which all our decisions pass. Organizations in virtually every

industry realize this, which is why we develop and implement core values.

Organizational values provide the foundation upon which goals are achieved and all business decisions are made. We have come to understand that these values are important because without them business becomes dysfunctional.

There are several ways in which this can be demonstrated. We hire people for their competencies (technical ability), and we discipline or fire people because of their behaviors and traits. Companies may have many organizational rules; however, people are primarily disciplined or terminated for violating core values. Organizations that establish core values say to their employees: "If you follow these principles as your guide, you will not go astray." Core values tell us how we treat others in our day-to-day business contacts.

As important as organizational core values are, each organization determines its own set of principles to succeed in their work environment. Is there a fundamental set of principles which apply to all people at all times in all places? Does each individual and organization develop their own value system?

Living Effectively Through the Power of God

The members of the Christian Chiefs Organization believe that their primary source of knowledge and leadership is found in the Bible. The Bible is a holy book applicable to all men and women in every culture, at every age, in every walk of life. It is intended to reveal the mind and ways of God so that humankind may know and experience His blessings for life on Earth and hereafter.

(Continued on page 15)

Christian group... (continued)

The Bible is the recorded document of His works through the ages. It includes substantial evidence of His nature, plan and purposes so that we can legitimately and confidently place our faith in Him. The Bible is inspired by God; therefore, we believe it is life's final and ultimate authority. No individual, institution or organization can supercede the authority of scripture from which there is no appeal.

If you accept this, and we as Christian Chiefs do, then you believe that this is the foundation upon which you build character, and strong character enables you to lead and manage effectively.

God, the Bible and Business

When I was attending business school I was required to study many textbooks. One textbook that was not required reading was the Bible. The Bible takes a radically different approach to business from most business schools today. It is an approach more concerned with people, ethics and eternity than with outcomes or profits.

We as members of the Christian Chiefs Organization are not the first persons to discover the principles of business taught in the Bible. The use of the Bible as a business text in America goes back hundreds of years. In fact, every college or university established in America prior to 1800, with the exception of one, was founded by a pastor. During this period there was not a public school system; children were taught in the church. This was because it was intuitively understood that character building is the foundation for all learning.

The early American business courses and business schools themselves were based on Biblical principles. In fact, it would be erroneous to label them "business schools," because in reality they were Biblical schools training future business leaders. Stephen Covey, bestselling author of "Seven Habits of Highly Effective

People," made a powerful discovery in his research for the book. He discovered that the dominant focus of all leadership material written during the first 150 years of this country was character. In other words, you develop leadership by building the character ethic.

Since that time much of the leadership material written in America focuses on methods and techniques of leadership, which Covey calls "the personality ethic"; in other words, how to demonstrate leadership through the use of techniques and methods. Covey indicates in this book that both the character ethic and personality ethic are important, but says the character ethic is the foundation upon which the personality ethic must be built. He indicates that utilizing the personality ethic works in the short run but fails in the long run without a strong, positive character ethic. The Christian Chiefs Organization seeks to help build a Chief's character ethic with God's guidance so that he or she may be more effective at work and at home.

Home is Where the Heart is

If you took a poll of every employee at your work place and asked them this one question: what is more important to you, your job or your family – what would they answer? I suspect you would get a 100 percent response that the family is more important than the job. However, as I indicated earlier in the studies done on the daily lives of Christians, even Christians have a difficult time prioritizing what they value.

The difficulty is in the execution of living our values. Common knowledge is not common practice. Being an effective leader at work is important, but if your faith doesn't work at home, it simply doesn't work. The new Christian Chiefs Organization seeks to serve as another accountability group for Chiefs to ensure that they are living their values both at work and at home.

It is at home where we are known the most completely, and fully exhibit our strengths and weaknesses. This is where the greatest challenge comes for living the Christian life. The purpose of our work is to support our family life. If we build a strong family, we can then become a more productive employee. In the busyness of our work, let us not forget that home is where the heart is.

The Outlook for Christian Chiefs

Just what exactly should a Christian Chief attempt to accomplish in the very challenging world of policing? He or she should attempt to understand God's word and apply it to daily living. Do Biblical principles of business work? Without question they do – over the long run. If you're looking just for quick solutions, God's way is not it. If you desire long term growth and stability, God's way is the only way.

As Jesus said in Matthew 7:24-25, "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine, and acts upon them, may be compared to a wise man, who built his house upon the rock. And the rain descended and the floods came and the winds blew and burst against the house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded upon the rock."

Chiefs interested in learning more about this organization and its future meetings may call Chief Patrick Oliver: (614) 488-7901.

About the author: Chief Oliver serves the city of Grandview Heights, Ohio. He is a graduate of PELC and CLEE, and is treasurer of OACP, on the Executive Committee.

OPC